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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines how the Austin Independent School District (Texas) tried to deal with the following questions: (1) Should special education students be included in the administration of standardized tests?; (2) Should their scores be included or excluded in the reporting of test results?; and (3) What are the evidences that test scores reflect schools' "true" achievement level? Previously, the inclusion or the exemption of the special education students was determined by hours of service criterion. In the early 1980s, based on a comprehensive decision-making process and computerized record keeping system, this responsibility was transferred to each student's Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. The guidelines used by this committee are attached. As regards the inclusion of the test scores, all valid scores are reported. However, the scores of special education students who were tested even though exempted by their ARD Committees, or who took the test for experience only, are not reported. Concerning the scores representing "true" achievement, test scores obtained by procedures which are part of the norming procedure are not treated as valid. Besides the student exemptions policies, copies of participation forms for levels K-8 and 9-12, automatic decisions programmed into the computer for various grade levels, special testing procedures, and a letter to the itinerant teachers for the visually handicapped are attached. (JAZ)

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SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS: TO BE (TESTED) OR NOT TO BE (TESTED)?
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION

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SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS: TO BE (TESTED) OR NOT TO BE (TESTED)?
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION

Introduction

The passage of P.L. 94-142 in 1975 heralded a drastic change in the education of special education students. It mandated the "least restrictive" educational environment and installed the mainstreaming concept in the landscape of American education. Concurrent with these developments has been an increased emphasis on achievement testing (both norm- and criterion-referenced) as a measure of evaluation and accountability. Achievement test scores have become, rightly or wrongly, the principal gauge by which the public judges the effectiveness of schools. Questions which arise from these two developments include:

1. How should we include or exclude special education students in the administration of standardized achievement tests to uphold both the spirit and letter of the law?
2. How should we include or exclude the scores of special education students in the reporting of test results?
3. How can we be sure that our test scores reflect our schools' "true" achievement levels?

These questions, as well as related ones, have received considerable attention for several years in the Austin Independent School District (AISD), Austin, Texas. While other districts have struggled with these questions, also, only recently has a call come forth for some answers at a national-organization level. At a 1985 AERA/NCME convention symposium, E. Peckman noted a number of unresolved questions pertaining to standardized testing of handicapped students. This paper outlines the answers arrived at in Austin to the questions above and to many of the unresolved questions noted by Peckman (1985).

Our Perspective

It will be useful for the reader to note the context in which Austin's answers were formulated. The perspective of the authors is that of administrators in the District's testing office who are concerned with fair, reliable, and valid measurement of all students' achievement for the purpose of districtwide decision making. We are not special education administrators. We are not involved in trying to guide special education program planning, nor with determining the progress made in special education by individual students. Testing for the purpose of program placement or exit also falls outside our area of concern. We are regular education administrators who, quite simply, have tried to come to grips with what Peckman (1985) describes as the "practical implementation issues," viz., which special education students should be included in group tests and under what circumstances. We also wanted to foster, in the spirit of mainstreaming, the fullest possible participation by special education students in standardized testing activities. This pragmatic approach led us to consider and resolve, operationally if not philosophically, a range of issues related to standardized testing and special education students.

Criteria for Exclusion from Testing

As the office responsible for districtwide achievement testing, AISD's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) has played the major role for many years in determining which special education students should be included in or excluded from test administrations. ORE assumed responsibility for the systemwide testing program in 1975-76 and specific criteria for exempting students from districtwide achievement testing were adopted. The policy regarding exemption from systemwide achievement testing has changed several times over the years. The exemption policies dealing with special education students are detailed in Attachment 1. Basically, two general approaches have been taken in the 10 years in which ORE has administered AISD's systemwide testing program, both for an approximately equal number of years: (1) exemption based on the number of hours of special education services received, and (2) exemption as determined by the judgment of an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee.

Hours of Service Criterion

Prior to 1981-82, inclusion in standardized testing was made on the basis of the number of hours of special education services received each day. Special education students could have been excluded from testing if they received one or more hours (grades 1-6) or more than three hours (grades 7-12) of services per day. The precise reasoning which led to these exclusion rules is no longer known. It may be that the one-hour criterion was selected for the elementary grades because it effectively excludes all elementary special education students from testing. At the secondary level, the three-hour standard was probably selected to exclude integrated (now called partially self-contained) and self-contained special education students. Presumably, these students were regarded as difficult to test. The reasoning seems to have been that students receiving fewer than three hours of special education services did not function differently from other, regular education students and could therefore be tested.

ARD Committee Decision

Beginning in the 1981-82 school year, the testing status of special education students has been determined by each student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. (As described in Attachment 1, some decisions were made by ARD Committees in 1980-81. However, the system was not fully implemented until the 1981-82 school year.) The basic reasoning leading to this change was that decisions relating to special education students should not be made wholesale by the testing office, but rather, both as a matter of logic and of law, should be made individually by the deliberative body charged with overseeing the progress of a special education student's education, the ARD Committee.

Implementing the ARD Committee Decision Criterion

While appealing both for its sense of rightness and its conceptual simplicity, the decision to shift the responsibility for determining which special education students were to be included and which excluded from standardized testing to the ARD Committees was anything but simple to

implement. To accomplish the changeover, a comprehensive decision-making and record-keeping system was needed which would satisfy the following requirements:

1. Incorporate all standardized testing in the District;
2. Permit ARD Committees to make decisions on a test-by-test, and a subtest-by-subtest basis;
3. Make provisions for special testing procedures; and,
4. Accommodate the District's high school graduation minimum competency requirements.

As a gauge of the complexity of the system which was conceived, it can be noted that at the time that these changes were contemplated, AISD was administering two major achievement test batteries, The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) to students in grades K-6 and the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) to students in grades 9-12. AISD was also administering several standardized tests of vocational aptitude and preference to secondary students. A locally developed, criterion-referenced minimum competency test was being given to high school students. Finally, along with all other Texas school districts, AISD had to administer a state-mandated, criterion-referenced basic skills test to selected elementary grades.

The main features of the system as it developed included:

1. Optical scanning forms--one for grades K-8 and another for grades 9-12 (later replaced by a single form),
2. A permanent computer file, the Special Education Testing (SET) file, maintained by ORE,
3. Special education testing status printouts sent to schools, and
4. An administrative regulation and guidelines for the ARD Committees.

Optical scanning sheets. There had to be a mechanism whereby ARD Committee decisions could be communicated to the testing office and to the school personnel who would carry them out. To this end, ORE developed a scannable form to be filled out by the ARD Committees. For the first two years, different forms were used for grades K-8 and 9-12, but in 1983-84 the forms were combined. Copies of the initial forms and the current, combined sheet are Attachments 2 and 3.

A host of problems arose in connection with the procedure for completing the scanning sheet, many of which had to do with incorrectly filling out the sheet. To address this problem, ORE wrote into the processing programs mechanisms for compensating for incorrect or incomplete information. See Attachment 4.

Permanent computer file. ORE created a permanent computer file, the Special Education Testing (SET) file, into which the scanning forms were read. For the first few years, scanning forms were required annually for each special education student, except those who were automatically exempt, so the SET file was virtually recreated each year. In the last few years, scanning sheets have been required only for those students whose testing status was changed by their ARD Committees.

Testing status printouts. In the fall and then in the spring before the test administrations, ORE sends a printout to each school listing the testing status of each special education student on it. In 1981-82, the schools updated the listings themselves, but after meetings with the special education administrative supervisors, it was agreed that all changes in a special education student's testing status had to be made through the student's ARD Committee and communicated to ORE via a special education scanning sheet.

Minimum competency. Since the 1975-76 school year, AISD has had a minimum competency testing requirement as part of its high school graduation requirements. Special education students can graduate without meeting this and other requirements for graduation applicable to nonhandicapped students, but when possible it is desirable for a student to graduate under the regular education plan. Among their deliberations, ARD Committees had to make decisions about how the excluding of students from standardized testing would affect their graduation status. Until the state minimum competency requirement superseded AISD's procedures, if a special education student could be tested validly on any of several tests, and attained a score above the cutoff, the minimum competency testing requirement was fulfilled.

Administrative regulation and guidelines for ARD Committees. To formalize the new procedures, an administrative regulation was written and adopted into district policy. At that time, a document entitled Information for ARD Committees to Aid in Determining Participation in Standardized Testing by Special Education Students was produced. This document has been revised and reprinted annually since then. Attachment 5 is section A of the latest (August, 1985) edition of these guidelines.

One feature of section A worthy of scrutiny is the "factors to consider" by an ARD Committee in making its determination whether a student should be tested or not. First, it will be noted that the hours of service criterion previously discussed was carried over into the administrative regulation. Second, provision was made for a student who was exempted from testing by an ARD Committee to take the test for the experience of taking a standardized test. As originally conceived, this alternative was made available in response to teachers' concerns about students feeling set apart and excluded from an activity in which all the other students were participating. It was anticipated that very few students would be tested "for experience only." In this expectation, testing staff were greatly mistaken. Experience-only testing was to prove a major headache for testing staff, special education staff, and nearly everyone else involved with the testing.

Experience-Only Testing

Reporting. At the outset, experience-only test scores were withheld from the campuses. The reasoning was that since the ARD Committee had determined that the student could not make a valid score on a standardized test, and that the student had taken the test solely for the test-taking experience, the student's score was invalid a priori and of questionable validity in any event. Under pressure from school staff and special education staff for the scores, this position soon gave way. ORE began reporting experience-only scores only to the special education supervisors/coordinators for the purpose of making decisions about the students' testing status for the next year. Coordinators were requested to use their professional judgment in deciding whether to share the scores with other school personnel, the students, or the students' parents. To allay the continued demand for experience-only scores, for the past few years ORE has produced a single, letter-sized report of each special education student's scores, both valid and experience only, to be placed in the student's special education folder on campus.

Misconceptions. The most persistent problems with experience-only testing came about because of misconceptions about what "experience only" meant. To the testing staff in ORE, experience-only testing was intended to be a minor subcategory of exemption, to be employed infrequently. However, campus personnel, and sometimes special education staff, confused the experience-only testing status with the criteria for excluding special education students' test scores from the schoolwide averages. The category came to be regarded as a means for schools to protect themselves from the test scores of special education students, which they feared would be averaged in with their other test scores and "drag them down." In fact, the criteria for excluding special education students' test scores (to be discussed in the next section) had nothing to do with the experience-only status of the scores. This was communicated to campuses and special education staff innumerable times, but the misconception persisted. In consequence, special education staff reported that pressure was sometimes brought to bear on ARD Committees to determine that special education students should be tested for experience only rather than for valid scores. As a result, a sort of "ghost testing" emerged in which a substantial number of special education students were tested for experience only when they could have been tested for valid scores. More will be said about this point later.

Minimum competency. The experience-only category led to some problems with the minimum competency status of special education students. Special education students could be exempted from the minimum competency testing requirement for high school graduation. In a few cases, exempted students took and passed a minimum competency test, whereupon schools requested, even demanded, that the student's exempt status be altered post facto. Rather than penalize the student, ORE made the change, but did so with the uneasy recognition that changing the student's status after the fact did violence to the whole system of having the ARD Committees decide student testing status and may, in fact, have been illegal. However, confusion over the proper completion of the scanning form cast doubt about whether some students were ever intended to be exempt.

Drawbacks to the System

The new procedure, while allowing for the maximum possible flexibility in deciding special education students' testing status, vastly complicated ORE's record keeping. For their part, ARD Committees had to add the decision making to their already lengthy deliberations. Both of these allocations of resources seem to be worthwhile in view of the outcomes, however.

Some problems with the system remain troublesome. One of the most basic is that, although the attempt was made to incorporate all standardized testing, the system has never become fully functional for the standardized instruments other than achievement tests. The data were maintained on the SET file, but only token attempts were made to encourage other offices to participate in the decision making and to access the data. In truth, the system works best for the norm-referenced, achievement tests whose administration is coordinated by ORE. The TABS (Texas Assessment of Basic Skills), the state-mandated, criterion-referenced basic skills test, sticks out as an exception to many statements in the guidelines for ARD Committees. Although ORE has taken great pains to accommodate the exceptions in the guidelines, the TABS, now the TEAMS (Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills), has done conceptual violence to the system.

Another continuing problem, as discussed earlier, is the persistent confusion about the experience-only decision category. As will be discussed later, there has been some progress toward the original conception of the category, but there is still room for improvement.

ARD Committee Decision vs. Hours of Service Criterion

In spite of these problems, the changeover from the hours of service criterion to having the ARD Committees determine special education students' testing status was a positive step toward broadening the participation of special education students in standardized testing. Figures 1 and 2 show the testing status of students for 1984-85 based upon these two methods, ARD Committee decision versus hours of services received per day.

- o More students were scheduled to be tested in 1984-85 at grades 1-12 by the ARD Committees than might have been tested if numbers of service hours determined testing status.
- o Fewer students were exempted from testing by the ARD Committees than might have been exempted if number of service hours determined testing status.

Figures 3 and 4 provide the number and percent of special education students scheduled to be tested or exempted from testing, as determined by ARD Committees, in 1984-85 compared with the same information for the two previous years.

(Text continues on page 11.)

1984-85 TESTING STATUS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AS DETERMINED
BY THE ARD COMMITTEES, SHOWN BY HOURS OF SERVICE
(NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS)

ARD Committees

Testing Status: Grades 1-6Hours Served Per Day

	<u>≤ 3</u>	> 3	TOTAL
All Tests Valid (V)	34.4% (909)	5.4% (144)	39.8% (1053)
All Tests Experience Only (E)	4.1% (109)	1.8% (47)	5.9% (156)
All Tests Exempt (Δ)	5.7% (152)	18.9% (501)	24.6% (653)
Combination (V, E, and Δ)	24.6% (650)	5.1% (134)	29.7% (784)
TOTAL	68.8% (1820)	31.2% (826)	100.0% (2646)

ARD Committee

Testing Status: Grades 7 and 8Hours Served Per Day

	<u>≤ 3</u>	> 3	TOTAL
All Tests Valid (V)	46.9% (442)	15.5% (146)	62.4% (588)
All Tests Experience Only	5.4% (51)	4.7% (44)	10.1% (95)
All Tests Exempt (Δ)	4.2% (40)	16.6% (157)	20.8% (197)
Combination (V, E, and Δ)	5.1% (48)	1.6% (15)	6.7% (63)
TOTAL	61.6% (581)	38.4% (362)	100.0% (943)

ARD Committee

Testing Status: Grades 9-12Hours Served Per Day

	<u>≤ 3</u>	> 3	
All Tests Valid (V)	41.4% (513)	13.6% (169)	55.0% (682)
All Tests Experience Only (E)	2.4% (30)	2.6% (32)	5.0% (62)
All Tests Exempt (Δ)	11.9% (148)	25.1% (311)	37.0% (459)
Combination (V, E, and Δ)	1.9% (24)	1.0% (13)	2.9% (37)
TOTAL	57.6% (715)	42.3% (525)	99.9% (1240)

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS
TO BE TESTED OR EXEMPTED FROM TESTING FOR 1984-85,
ARD COMMITTEE DECISION VS. HOURS OF SERVICE CRITERION

<u>Grades 1-6</u>	<u>Students To Be Tested (V, E, or Combination)</u>	<u>Students Exempted From Testing</u>
Testing Status Determined by Number of Hours (>1)	0 (0%)	2646 (100.0%)
Testing Status Determined by ARD Committee	1993 (75.3%)	653 (24.7%)
<u>Grades 7-8</u>		
Testing Status Determined by Number of Hours (>3)	581 (61.6%)	362 (38.4%)
Testing Status Determined by ARD Committee	746 (79.1%)	197 (20.9%)
<u>Grades 9-12</u>		
Testing Status Determined by Number of Hours (>3)	715 (57.6%)	525 (42.3%)
Testing Status Determined by ARD Committee	781 (63.0%)	459 (37.0%)

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS TO
BE TESTED OR EXEMPTED FROM TESTING, GRADES 1-6
AND 7-8, 1982-83 THROUGH 1984-85

<u>ARD Committee</u> <u>Testing Status:</u> Grades 1-6	<u>Students to be</u> <u>Tested or Exempted</u>		
	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
All Tests Valid (V)	30.0% (959)	35.7% (1089)	39.8% (1053)
All Tests Experience Only (E)	10.0% (321)	7.7% (234)	5.9% (156)
All Tests Exempt (Δ)	28.9% (924)	26.5% (808)	24.6% (653)
Combination (V, E, and Δ)	31.1% (997)	30.0% (915)	29.7% (784)
TOTAL	100.0% (3201)	99.9% (3046)	100.0% (2646)
	(100.0%)	(100.0%)	(100.0%)

<u>ARD Committee</u> <u>Testing Status:</u> Grades 7-8	<u>Students to be</u> <u>Tested or Exempted</u>		
	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
All Tests Valid (V)	50.2% (550)	54.8% (573)	62.4% (588)
All Tests Experience Only (E)	8.9% (98)	11.2% (117)	10.1% (95)
All Tests Exempt (Δ)	30.8% (337)	27.2% (284)	20.8% (197)
Combination (V, E, and Δ)	10.0% (110)	6.9% (72)	6.7% (63)
TOTAL	100.0% (1095)	100.1% (1046)	100.0% (943)
	(100.0%)	(100.0%)	(100.0%)

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS TO BE
TESTED OR EXEMPTED FROM TESTING, GRADES 9-12,
1982-83 THROUGH 1984-85

ARD Committee Testing Status: Grades 9-12	Students to be Tested or Exempted		
	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
All Tests Valid (V)	46.9% (782)	48.6% (750)	55.0% (682)
All Tests Experience Only (Δ)	5.1% (85)	5.0% (78)	5.0% (62)
All Tests Exempt (Δ)	43.3% (722)	42.4% (656)	37.0% (459)
Combination (V, E, and Δ)	<u>4.8%</u> (80)	<u>3.9%</u> (61)	<u>3.0%</u> (37)
	100.1% (1699) (100%)	99.9% (1545) (100%)	100.0% (1240) (100%)

It may be seen from the figures that:

- o A greater percentage of students was scheduled to be tested for valid scores in 1984-85 than was scheduled in either 1983-84 or 1982-83.
- o A smaller percentage of students in grades 1-6 was to be tested for experience only in 1984-85 than in 1983-84 or 1982-83.
- o In grades 7-8, a smaller percentage of students was to be tested for experience only in 1984-85 than in 1983-84. However, the percentages of students to be tested for experience only in 1984-85 and 1983-84 both exceeded the percentage to be tested for experience only in 1982-83.
- o In grades 9-12, approximately the same percentages of students were to be tested for experience only in each of the three years reported.
- o Smaller percentages of students were to be exempted from testing or to be tested on selected tests in 1984-85 than in the previous two years.

Overall, the data in Figures 3 and 4 suggest a trend in the direction of ARD Committees deciding that more special education students should be tested for valid scores. Whether this apparent intent on the part of ARD Committees is being realized is addressed in the next section.

Match Between ARD Committee Decision and Actual Involvement

The ARD Committees determined the testing status for each special education student for each subtest. The extent to which the ARD Committee decisions for 1984-85 were carried out by the schools is shown in Figures 5 and 6.

- o The ARD Committees designated that more tests in grades 9-12 should be taken for a valid score than not taken (exempt). This did, in fact, occur in practice.
- o Numerous tests were not taken when they should have been taken for a valid score or for experience only. Likewise, numerous tests were taken that should not have been.

Figure 7 shows the number and percent of the departures from ARD Committees' decisions in 1984-85, compared to the two previous school years.

- o The percentage of tests to be taken for a valid score that were not taken declined in grades 1-12; however, the percentage of tests to be taken for experience only that were not taken increased sharply, in grades 9-12. The percentage of tests that were not to have been taken and were taken also increased both at grades 1-6 and 7-8, but decreased at grades 9-12.

(Text continues on page 15.)

TEST DECISIONS MADE BY THE ARD COMMITTEES COMPARED TO THE TESTS
ACTUALLY TAKEN BY SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN 1984-85

GRADES 1-6		Tests Taken Experience Only			Did Not Take Test		Total
ARD Testing Decision for a Test	Valid Experience Only Exempt No Decision TOTAL	Valid					
		52.6% (13409)	X		3.8% (957)		56.4% (14366)
		X	8.4% (2130)		1.6% (404)		10.0% (2534)
		X	3.6% (906)		27.1% (6898)		30.7% (7804)
		3.0% (773)	X		X		3.0% (773)
		55.6% (14182)	12.0% (3036)		32.5% (8259)		100.1% (25477) (100%)

GRADES 7-8		Tests Taken Experience Only			Did Not Take Test		Total
ARD Testing Decision for a Test	Valid Experience Only Exempt No Decision TOTAL	Valid					
		57.6% (6217)	X		5.3% (568)		62.9% (6785)
		X	10.2% (1096)		2.4% (262)		12.6% (1358)
		X	2.3% (246)		21.4% (2307)		23.7% (2553)
		0.9% (99)	X		X		0.9% (99)
		58.5% (6316)	12.5% (1342)		29.1% (3137)		100.1% (10795) (100%)

GRADES 9-12		Tests Taken Experience Only			Did Not Take Test		Total
ARD Testing Decision for a Test	Valid Experience Only Exempt No Decision TOTAL	Valid					
		38.9% (2790)	X		11.6% (835)		50.5% (3625)
		X	2.2% (158)		3.4% (245)		5.6% (403)
		X	3.1% (221)		37.3% (2677)		40.4% (2898)
		3.4% (242)	X		X		3.4% (242)
		42.3% (3032)	5.3% (379)		52.3% (3757)		99.9% (7168) (100%)

X = Not applicable.
Cannot occur.

Number and percent are based on the total number of tests possible for all special education students in each of the grade ranges shown.

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF TESTS TAKEN BY SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN
1984-85 NOT FOLLOWING ARD COMMITTEE DECISIONS

<u>Official (ARD) Testing Status</u>	<u>Taken for Experience Only</u>	<u>Not Taken</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Valid		957 (6.7%)	14366	Grades
Experience Only		404 (15.9%)	2534	1-6
Exempt	906 (11.6%)		7804	
Valid		568 (8.4%)	6785	Grades
Experience Only		262 (19.3%)	1358	7-8
Exempt	246 (9.6%)		2553	
Valid		835 (23.0%)	3625	Grades
Experience Only		245 (60.8%)	403	9-12
Exempt	221 (7.6%)		2898	

Percentages are of totals within a given category, e.g., valid.

Total Number and Percent of Tests Not Following ARD Decision

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Total Number of Tests*</u>
Grades 1-6:	2267	9.2%	24,704 tests
Grades 7 and 8:	1076	10.1%	10,696 tests
Grades 9-12:	1301	18.8%	6,926 tests
Grades 1-12:	4644	11.0%	42,326 tests

* Total number of tests about which ARD Committees made decisions in each of the grade ranges shown.

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF TESTS TAKEN BY SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS
NOT FOLLOWING ARD COMMITTEE DECISIONS, 1982-83 THROUGH 1984-85

Official (ARD) Testing Status:				Valid			Experience Only			Exempt					
Tests Actually Were:				Not Taken			Not Taken			Taken for Experience Only			TOTAL		
Grades 1-6:	# % N*	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85		
		1818	1435	957	1011	457	404	1724	944	906	4553	2836	2267		
		12.9	9.0	6.7	17.4	12.3	15.9	14.3	9.9	11.6	14.3	9.7	9.2		
		14,062	15,893	14,366	5804	3711	2534	12,047	9489	7804	31,913	29,093	24,704		
Grades 7-8:	# % N*	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85		
		1038	779	568	412	290	262	484	290	246	1934	1359	1076		
		16.9	12.3	8.4	25.2	17.8	19.3	10.5	8.4	9.6	15.6	11.9	10.1		
		6140	6309	6785	1635	1633	1358	4589	3462	2553	12,364	11,404	10,696		
Grades 9-12	# % N*	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85		
		1167	1151	835	210	218	245	976	366	221	2353	1735	1301		
		36.2	25.9	23.0	44.0	37.5	60.8	21.6	8.8	7.6	28.6	18.9	18.8		
		3221	4448	3625	477	582	403	4521	4142	3898	8219	9172	6926		
Grades 1-12:	# % N*	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85	82-83	83-84	84-85		
		4023	3365	2360	1633	965	911	3184	1600	1373	8840	5930	4644		
		17.2	12.6	9.5	20.6	16.3	21.2	15.0	9.4	10.4	16.8	11.9	11.0		
		23,423	26,650	24,776	7916	5926	4295	21,157	17,093	13,255	52,496	46,669	42,326		

* N = TOTAL NUMBER OF TESTS. This is the actual number of tests to be taken. This includes tests taken by special education students in accordance with ARD Committee decisions.

- o Overall, in grades 1-8 there was a closer match between ARD Committee decisions on the testing status of special education students and their actual involvement in standardized testing in 1984-85 than in the previous two years.
- o In grades 9-12, the match between ARD Committee decisions on the testing status of special education students and their actual involvement in standardized testing was about the same in 1984-85 as in 1983-84.
- o Over the past three school years, both the number and percent of the tests not following ARD Committee decisions have declined.

Notwithstanding this positive trend, there still seems to be a tendency to test some special education students for experience only who probably should be tested for valid scores. Special education students score in the entire range of percentile ranks. The percent and number of tests taken for a valid score or for experience only yielding scores in various percentile ranks are shown in Figure 8.

- o Some special education students scored at the highest percentile ranks on tests that were taken for experience only.
- o Special education students score below the 30th percentile in the majority of tests taken for either a valid score or experience only.

Criteria for Exclusion of Scores in Reported Test Results

Individual Students' Scores

AISD schools receive from ORE several types of test reports, providing both individual and school and district summary results. In reports of individual results, such as alphabetic and rank-order listings, all valid student scores are reported, including those of special education students. The scores of special education students who were tested even though exempted by their ARD Committees, or who took the test for experience only, are not reported to schools. The students' names are printed, but an "E," noted as "EXPERIENCE ONLY. SCORE SENT TO SPECIAL ED," is printed where a score would usually appear. This procedure is followed so that school personnel and others will know that a given student was in fact tested and that the scores are available elsewhere (in special education students' folders, with the special education coordinators, and in ORE). In sum, only valid scores are printed on regular reports. Experience-only scores are reported in more restricted formats to guard against their possible misuse.

School and District Summary Results

Beginning in 1981-82, students' scores were excluded from school and district summary reports under the conditions shown in Attachment 6. Before 1981-82, as previously discussed, the students themselves were exempted from testing based on the number of hours of special education services.

(Text continues on page 19.)

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

SW-SZ640-01-01

FREQUENCY OF ITBS TEST SCORES
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

DATE OF TESTING: SPRING 1985

IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

DATE OF PRINTING: 06/10/85

SCHOOL(S): ALL SCHOOLS
GRADES(S): 1-6
TEST(S): ALL TESTS

% = PERCENT
N = NUMBER OF STUDENTS

PERCENT AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS SCORING AT THESE PERCENTILE RANKS*

		1 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70 - 79	80 - 89	90 - 99
STUDENTS TESTED	% =	26.0	19.9	13.9	11.1	7.9	7.2	5.0	4.0	3.1	1.8
FOR	N =	3932	2943	2046	1634	1173	1070	739	597	465	264
A VALID SCORE											
16 STUDENTS TESTED	% =	47.4	22.7	12.0	7.2	3.8	2.5	2.0	0.9	0.9	0.6
FOR	N =	1449	695	368	219	117	75	61	26	27	19
EXPERIENCE ONLY											

* On individual subtests, not on the complete test battery

Figure 8
(Page 1 of 3)

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

SW-SE640-01-01

FREQUENCY OF ITBS TEST SCORES
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

DATE OF TESTING: SPRING 1985

IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

DATE OF PRINTING: 06/10/85

SCHOOL(S): ALL SCHOOLS
GRADES(S): 7-8
TEST(S): ALL TESTS

% = PERCENT
N = NUMBER OF STUDENTS

PERCENT AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS SCORING AT THESE PERCENTILE RANKS*

		1 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70 - 79	80 - 89	90 - 99
STUDENTS TESTED FOR A VALID SCORE	% =	26.3	21.5	17.0	12.0	8.6	6.1	4.0	1.7	1.7	1.3
	N =	1638	1357	1073	755	541	386	251	108	109	81
17 STUDENTS TESTED FOR EXPERIENCE ONLY	% =	38.2	25.8	15.9	8.3	4.7	3.1	1.7	1.2	0.5	0.5
	N =	513	346	214	112	63	41	23	16	7	7

* On individual subtests, not on the complete test battery

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

SW-SE650-01-01

FREQUENCY OF TAP TEST SCORES
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

DATE OF TESTING: SPRING 1985

TESTS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND PROFICIENCY

DATE OF PRINTING: 06/10/85

SCHOOL(S): ALL SCHOOLS
GRADE(S): 9-12
TEST(S): ALL TESTS

Z = PERCENT
N = NUMBER OF STUDENTS

PERCENT AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS SCORING AT THESE PERCENTILE RANKS*

		1 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70 - 79	80 - 89	90 - 99
STUDENTS TESTED	Z =	28.0	23.5	15.4	11.0	6.4	5.8	3.7	2.8	1.9	1.3
FOR	N =	844	709	464	332	192	175	112	85	58	40
A VALID SCORE											
STUDENTS TESTED	Z =	57.5	21.9	9.8	5.5	2.4	1.1	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.5
FOR	N =	219	83	37	21	9	4	3	1	1	2
EXPERIENCE ONLY											

* On individual subtests, not on the complete test battery

Special education students' scores are excluded as follows:

Grades K-6

Scores for special education students who received one or more hours of special education services per day, or who took the test even though exempted by their ARD Committee, or who took the test for experience only.

Grades 7-12

Scores for special education students who received more than three hours of special education services per day, or who took the test even though exempted by their ARD Committee, or who took the test for experience only.

In short, other than the addition of experience-only scores to the exclusionary rules, special education students' test scores are excluded from summary reports according to the same criteria by which students themselves used to be excluded from testing. Several factors account for this. The first is a disinclination by ORE to report longitudinal results for which different exclusion rules were used in different years. Previous years' results could be recalculated according to new rules, but the size of the task mitigates against embarking on this course casually. A second reason that students' scores are excluded from summary reports even though they are no longer systematically exempted is the apprehension on the part of campus-level personnel that the scores of their special education students will adversely (and differentially) affect their summary results. ORE staff have entertained the notion that all valid scores should be included in school and district summary reports--a proposal which seems to be favorably regarded by special education administrative staff--but informal discussions with school personnel have not given the idea particular encouragement.

Recalculating Junior High School Districtwide Medians

Secondary and elementary special education students are excluded from districtwide ITBS calculations according to different criteria. Secondary students are excluded from districtwide scores if they receive more than three hours of special education services per day; elementary students are excluded if they receive one or more hours of special education services. As with the criteria for exclusion of students from testing, the reasoning for this difference is no longer known. Consideration of a single criterion brings up the same sort of difficulties as with new exclusion rules. Clearly, however, the different criteria influence the reported results. Figure 9 presents 1984-85 junior high median percentile scores for each of the skills area totals and for the composite test calculated with special education students excluded according to the usual junior high criterion and according to the elementary criterion. As shown in the figure, the recalculated junior high school scores are all higher than those normally reported.

TEST	NUMBER OF HOURS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES			
	>3		<u>>1</u>	
	Grade 7		Grade 8	
	Mdn. (N)	Mdn. (N)	Mdn. (N)	Mdn. (N)
Composite	56 (4147)	59 (3968)	60 (3990)	63 (3773)
Reading Total	53 (4237)	55 (4043)	55 (4069)	58 (3842)
Math Total	53 (4243)	56 (4029)	57 (4058)	60 (3831)
Language Total	62 (4196)	64 (4007)	65 (4042)	69 (3816)
Work-Study Total	54 (4233)	56 (4040)	58 (4069)	61 (3840)

Figure 9. 1983-84 JUNIOR HIGH DISTRICTWIDE ITBS MEDIAN PERCENTILE SCORES, CALCULATED WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS EXCLUDED ACCORDING TO TWO DIFFERENT CRITERIA.

Knowing Whether Your Scores Represent "True" Achievement

When the initial decision was made to shift to the ARD Committees the responsibility of making decisions about which special education students should take which standardized tests, ORE developed some guidelines governing special testing procedures (see Attachment 7). As described in Attachment 7, for ORE special testing procedures fall into two categories, those which may invalidate the use of test norms and those which do not. For tests which do not have norms, this is not a concern. It was decided that test scores obtained by procedures which were not part of the norming procedure, such as extended testing time, could not be treated as valid. See Attachment 8 for a more complete discussion of this point. Here the following points can be made:

1. Implied in these special testing procedures, and in AISD's whole approach to the standardized testing of special education students, is the assumption that the ARD Committees can make valid judgments about whether special education students can take tests for valid scores, and
2. That if the special education students for whom ARD Committees have made this determination take the test under the same conditions as were applied to the norming group, the resulting scores are valid measurements of achievement.

In other words, achievement test scores obtained by special education students under certain special administrations (those which do not invalidate the test norms) are regarded as valid and comparable with scores obtained under standard administrations.

As a procedural footnote, it may be observed that test scores obtained by special education students under procedures which may invalidate the test norms are not "flagged," as is the practice of ETS and the College Entrance Examination Board. Rather, these scores are forced into the experience-only category and are, therefore, reported separately under the strictures described in the previous section.

ORE's interpretation of what constitutes valid test scores is not unanimously accepted even in AISD. While ORE holds that the scores of special education students tested under the same conditions as those applied to the norming group are representative of the students' true achievement levels, some special educational personnel in AISD do not agree or accept that definition. They interpret a student's true achievement level as "what a special education student would score on the test if the handicapping condition were removed." While not accepted by ORE, this interpretation is a potential problem when ARD committees designate tests to be taken "for experience only."

Ultimately, of course, classical testing theory holds that we can never know precisely what our "true" achievement levels are. However, employing the procedures described, it does not seem unreasonable to regard the test scores obtained by AISD special education students to be as valid as the test scores attained by regular education students.

Conclusions

Although there are many nuts-and-bolts details which need to be ironed out, the participation of special education students in standardized testing can be increased by having ARD Committees determine the standardized testing activities in which special education students may participate. Resources have to be allocated to set up a system to effectuate the necessary decision-making and record-keeping tasks. Care should be taken at the outset to avoid setting up a system which permits nebulous and dysfunctional categories--e.g., "experience only"--to evolve. Local and state minimum competency testing requirements for high school graduation must also be carefully incorporated in any systemwide changes.

Achievement testing is an important practice in public schools. The involvement of special education students, and the manner in which their achievement test scores are handled, must be given thorough consideration by educators and made into consistent policy. Given the national concern and call for policy statements regarding the testing of special education students, Austin ISD's experiences in formulating special education achievement testing policies should provide educators with useful and timely information.

Reference

- Pechman, E. M. (1985, April). Unresolved questions pertaining to standardized testing of handicapped students. Paper presented at the meeting of the National Council of Measurement in Education, Chicago.

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Austin, TexasStudent Exemptions from Achievement Testing

A. High School Exemption Policies

- o During the 1975-76 through 1977-78 school years, the following categories of students were exempted from STEP testing.

Any student who was enrolled in an integrated (self-contained) special education classroom was exempt from STEP testing.

- o Beginning in 1980-81 and continuing through 1984-85, special education students were exempted from STEP testing (1980-81 to 1982-83) and TAP (1983-84 to 1984-85) by their local Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee.

B. Junior High School Exemption Policies

- o During the 1975-76 and 1976-77 school years, special education students who spent two class periods or more of each school day in the resource room, or who were enrolled in integrated or self-contained special education classes, were exempted from CAT testing.
- o In 1977-78, students who were enrolled in integrated or self-contained special education classrooms were exempted from CAT testing, as before. Students who spent part of the day in the special education resource room were tested at the discretion of the special education teacher. Scores for those students were not included in the school summary reports.
- o During the 1978-79 and 1979-80 school years, only students who were enrolled in integrated or self-contained special education classes were exempted from the testing. Resource room students were required to take the test, and their scores were included in the school summaries.

- o Beginning with the 1980-81 school year, special education students were exempted from ITBS testing by the local Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. Students whose ARD Committees had not yet made a determination regarding their inclusion in or exclusion from testing for 1980-81 could be exempted at the discretion of the principal.

C. Elementary School Exemption Policies (Spring, Grades K-6)

- o The exemption policy for special education students remained unchanged from 1975-76 to 1979-80.

Special education students who spent one hour or more per day in the resource room, or who were enrolled in an integrated or self-contained classroom, were exempted from CAT (1975-76 to 1978-79) or ITBS (1979-80) testing.

- o Beginning with the 1980-81 school year, special education students were exempted from ITBS testing by the local Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. Students whose ARD Committees had not yet made a determination regarding their inclusion in or exclusion from testing for 1980-81 could be exempted at the discretion of the principal.

D. Kindergarten Exemption Policies (Fall, ITBS Level 5 Language Test)

- o In the 1981-82 school year, special education students were exempted from taking the ITBS Level 5 Language Test by the local ARD Committee. Students whose ARD Committees had not yet made a determination regarding their inclusion in or exclusion from testing for 1981-82 could be exempted at the discretion of the principal.
- o Beginning with the 1982-83 school year, special education students were exempted from taking the ITBS Level 5 Language Test only through their ARD Committees.

CAT = California Achievement Tests
ITBS = Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
STEP = Sequential Tests of Educational Progress
TAP = Tests of Achievement and Proficiency

CHECK STUDENT NUMBER AND OTHER IDENTIFYING INFORMATION FOR ACCURACY.

USE NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY

DATE _____

PRESENT SCHOOL

II. SPECIAL TESTING PROCEDURES

A	B
BRAILLE ☐	LARGE-TYPE ☐
READ TEST ☐	MARK ANSWERS ☐
EXTEND TIME ☐	INDIV. ADMIN. ☐
OTHER ☐	REVISE SCHED. ☐
	SIGNING ☐
	OTHER ☐

IF "OTHER" PROCEDURE REQUIRED,
DESCRIBE HERE:

IF A CATEGORY A PROCEDURE IS
NEEDED AND THE SCORE IS TO BE
COUNTED TOWARD MEETING MINI-
MUM COMPETENCY, FILL OUT A
REQUEST FOR SUPERINTENDENT'S
APPROVAL

IV GRADUATION COMPETENCY

THIS STUDENT CANNOT BE
VALIDLY TESTED FOR COM-
PETENCY IN:

☐ READING
☐ MATH

I. STUDENT INFOR- MATION

SCHOOL	
PRES- ENT	PRO- JECTED
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14
15	15
16	16
17	17
18	18
19	19
20	20
21	21
22	22
23	23
24	24
25	25
26	26
27	27
28	28
29	29
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31	31
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87	87
88	88
89	89
90	90
91	91
92	92
93	93
94	94
95	95
96	96
97	97
98	98
99	99
100	100

0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9

III. STANDARDIZED TESTS

FOR EACH TEST TO BE TAKEN.

MARK (C) IF THE SCORE WILL BE
VALID. MARK (E) IF THE TEST WILL
BE TAKEN FOR EXPERIENCE ONLY.

СМ-УЧОДП
МОАГО

19

10

11

12

TABS		STEP						MIN. COMP	DATE	ORDER	OTHER				
R	M	W	R	EE	SP	CP	M	S	SS				A	B	C
V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V			V	V	V	V
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E			E	E	E	E
R	M	W	R	EE	SP	CP	M	S	SS	R	M				
V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
R	M	W	R	EE	SP	CP	M	S	SS	R	M				
V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
R	M	W	R	EE	SP	CP	M	S	SS	R	M				
V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
R	M	W	R	EE	SP	CP	M	S	SS	R	M				
V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

TEST CODES

TABS: R-READING MIN. COMP.: R-READING
M-MATH M-MATH
W-WRITING

STEP: R-READING
EE-ENGLISH EXPRESSION
SP-SPELLING
CP-CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION } MECHANICS OF WRITING

M-MATH
S-SCIENCE
SS-SOCIAL STUDIES

*IF "OTHER" TEST(S) REQUIRED, WRITE
NAME(S) OF TEST(S) HERE:

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

Fill out a scanner sheet only for students new to AISD, or to change information currently on file for a student.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

- Complete each of the following areas on this scanning sheet:

I STUDENT INFORMATION

- Student Name (FULL NAME including middle initial)
- Student Number
- Current Grade (grade at time of ARD)
- Current School (school enrolled in at time of ARD)
- ARD Meeting Date (month and year)

II SPECIAL TESTING PROCEDURES

- Complete areas as they apply. If a Category "A" procedure is needed for a test, the test must be taken for experience only.

III STANDARDIZED TESTS

- Complete areas as they apply, for the grade in which the next testing will occur.
 - If student is exempt from the test, make no marks.
 - Mark 0 if student should take the test for a valid score.
 - Mark 0 if student should take the test for experience only.
- Grades 9-12 only: Information indicated for the TAP or TABS/TEAMS also determines the student's status for minimum competency testing.

TEST CODES

ITBS:LA-LANGUAGE
LI-LISTENING
M-MATHEMATICS
V-VOCABULARY
R-READING COMPREHENSION
WA-WORD ANALYSIS
SP-SPELLING
CA-CAPITALIZATION / LANGUAGE
PN-PUNCTUATION / SKILLS
US-USAGE
VM-VISUAL MATERIALS / WORK-STUDY
RM-REFERENCE MATERIALS / SKILLS
CN-CONCEPTS / MATH
PR-PROBLEMS / SKILLS
CM-COMPUTATION / SKILLS

TABS/TEAMS: R-READING
M-MATH
W-WRITING

TAP: R-READING COMPREHENSION
M-MATHEMATICS
WE-WRITTEN EXPRESSION
US-USING SOURCES OF INFORMATION
SS-SOCIAL STUDIES
S-SCIENCE

I/K: I-IDEAS
K-KUDER

NOTES ON MARKING THIS FORM CORRECTLY

- Use a Number 2 pencil only.
- Mark dark marks which fill the oval. Light, single lines are not sufficient marking.
- Erase completely all unwanted marks.
- Do not make holes in this sheet.
- Do not mark the ovals containing an "E" to indicate exempt. "E" means test the student for EXPERIENCE ONLY. If the student should be EXEMPT, do not mark any ovals.
- Do not fold or crease this sheet.

EAUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of Research and EvaluationAUTOMATIC DECISIONS PROGRAMMED INTO THE COMPUTER

To ensure that the most complete information for each student is recorded, some decisions have been made that the computer has been programmed to carry out automatically.

SHORT SUMMARIES

★ Category A = Experience
only tests

Valid ITBS =
Valid TEAMS

Blank test level =
test down one level
(grades 4-6 only)

No out-of-level testing
except grades 4-6

FOR GRADES K-12

- . In Section II, if the student is marked to be tested under one or more of the special testing procedures in Category A, all of the student's tests except TEAMS will be considered for experience only.

FOR GRADES 1, 3, 5, and 7

- . In Section III, if the student is marked for a valid (V) test on one or both of the ITBS reading tests, Vocabulary or Reading Comprehension (abbreviated V and R), and TEAMS Reading (R) has been left blank, TEAMS Reading will be considered valid.
- . If the student is marked for a valid test on one or more of the ITBS mathematics tests, Concepts, Problem Solving, or Computation (CN, PR, and CM), and TEAMS Mathematics (M) has been left blank, TEAMS Mathematics will be considered valid.
- . If the student is marked for a valid test on one or more of the ITBS language tests, Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation, or Usage (SP, CA, PN, and US), and TEAMS Writing (W) has been left blank, TEAMS Writing will be considered valid.

FOR GRADES 4-6

- . If no oval is marked in the box labeled "ITBS TEST LEVEL," the student will be assigned the test level one level down from that which would be given to a student in the same grade tested on-level.
- . If the student's grade is not 4, 5, or 6, and an oval is marked in the box labeled "ITBS TEST LEVEL," it will be treated as if it were blank.

(continued on next page)

FOR GRADES 9-12

Valid TAP = Valid TEAMS

- . In Section III, if the student is marked for a valid (V) test on TAP Reading Comprehension (R), and TEAMS Reading (R) has been left blank, TEAMS Reading will be considered valid.
- . If the student is marked for a valid test on TAP Mathematics (M), and TEAMS Mathematics (M) has been left blank, TEAMS Mathematics will be considered valid.
- . If the student is marked for a valid test on TAP Written Expression (WE), and TEAMS Writing (W) has been left blank, TABS Writing will be considered valid.

Valid TAP or TEAMS = Valid
for minimum competency
testing (grade 12 in
1985-86 only)

- . If the student is marked for a valid test on TAP Reading Comprehension (R) or TEAMS Reading (R), the student will be considered as valid for minimum competency testing in reading.
- . If the student is marked for a valid test on TAP Mathematics (M) or TEAMS Mathematics (M), the student will be considered as valid for minimum competency testing in mathematics.
- . In Section III, if the student is marked to be tested for experience only (E) or is exempt from testing on TAP Reading Comprehension (R) and is exempt from testing on TEAMS Reading (R), the student will be considered exempt from minimum competency testing in reading.
- . If the student is marked to be tested for experience only (E) or is exempt from testing on TAP Mathematics (M) and is exempt from testing on TEAMS Mathematics (M), the student will be considered exempt from minimum competency testing in mathematics.

★ Exempt or Experience only
TAP and Exempt TEAMS = Exempt
from minimum competency
testing (grade 12 in 1985-
86 only)

FOR GRADES 1,3, 5, 7 ,9 AND 11-12

★ Experience only TEAMS =
Exempt TEAMS

- . In Section III, if the student is marked for experience only on a TEAMS test, the student will be considered exempt from that test. (Only the older versions of the scanning sheet can be marked TEAMS For Experience Only. This procedure will be applied if an old scanning sheet is returned to ORE).

A

Administrative
RegulationREGULATION AND PROCEDURES

Administrative regulation EKC-R contains the District's procedures governing inclusion of special education students in standardized testing. As stated in the regulation, the ARD Committee will determine in which standardized testing activities a special education student should or should not participate. This is consistent with the rules adopted by the State Board of Education in February, 1985 regarding exemption from State assessment of minimum skills (section 101.3 of Chapter 101, Texas Administrative Code). As stated in the regulation, the ARD Committee should consider the following factors in making its determination.

Factors to Consider

- 1) A special education student who receives the majority of instruction from a regular classroom teacher in an area measured by a standardized test should take the test in that area.
- 2) Most students receiving more than three (3) hours per day of special education services should be exempt from standardized testing.
- 3) A student receiving three (3) hours or less per day of special education services who cannot be tested validly on a standardized test should be exempt.
- 4) A special education student who cannot make a valid score on a standardized test may be tested if inclusion in the testing experience would be of benefit to that student in other ways.

THIS IS THE DEFINITION
OF "FOR EXPERIENCE ONLY." →

Special Procedures
and Materials

For those students who are to participate in standardized testing, the ARD Committee is to determine which special administrative procedures and special testing materials are necessary to ensure valid test results. The Background Information on AISD Standardized Tests (B) and Special Testing Procedures for Standardized Tests (C) sections of this handout were developed to provide ARD Committee members with information relevant to making those decisions.

Inclusion of Scores
in Schools' Summary
Reports

ITBS/TAP: Test results for students in grades K-6 who receive one (1) hour or more per day of special education services are not included in the summary results reported for a school. Test results for students in grades 7-12 who receive more than three (3) hours per day of special education services are not included in summary reports.

TEAMS: The scores of all special education students tested, except those whose booklets were marked DO NOT SCORE, are included in schools' TEAMS summary reports.

Additional Copies

If additional copies of these materials are needed, please contact Rick Battaile at ORE (450-1227).

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of Research and Evaluation

Students to Include or to Exclude for
Systemwide Testing Reports and Analyses

1984-85 Report/Analysis	Special Education	LEP	Special Circumstances	Absences	Missing Data	School Code Changes Grade Level Changes Entry Date Test Level Test Changes Longitudinal/Other
Achievement Profiles "ALL STUDENTS"	excl: ≥ 1 hr/day in gr. K-6 > 3 hr/day in gr. 7-12 tested for experience only	excl: A & B	incl: all sp. circ.	excl: only for the tests missed (fewer than 4 items answered)	ethnicity: all un- known go in Anglo/ Other	retainers: incl. all in cur- rent gr. 1st graders in a K classroom should have taken the K level and be included in K re- sults.
"MATCHED GROUPS"	excl: ≥ 1 hr/day in gr. K-6 > 3 hr/day in gr. 7-12 tested for experience only	excl: A & B based on latest year only	incl: all sp. circ.	incl: only if all tests taken all years	ethnicity: all un- known go in Anglo/ Other Stu. has: no matches if missing any year	excl: if grade level does not in- crease by 1 (no more, no less) each year
Labels, Rank-Order Listings, Alphabetic Listings, Individual or Classroom Skills Summaries, Microfilm	incl: all tested validly	incl: all tested validly	incl: all sp. circ.	excl: only for the tests missed (fewer than 4 items an- swered)	print all missing data as blanks	
Individual Student Report (special ed)	incl: all tested or on special ed file	incl: all tested or on special ed file	incl: all sp. circ.	excl: same as above	same as above	
School Skills Summary	excl: same as profiles	excl: A & B	incl: all sp. circ.	excl: same as above	N/A	
District Skills Summary	excl: same as profiles	excl: A & B	incl: all sp. circ.	excl: same as above	N/A	

C

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of Research and Evaluation

SPECIAL TESTING PROCEDURES FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS

Q: WHEN SHOULD I ASK FOR SPECIAL TESTING PROCEDURES ON A STANDARDIZED TEST FOR A STUDENT AT MY SCHOOL?

A: Special testing procedures should be requested when a student would otherwise not be able to obtain a valid score on a regular test administration.

Q: WHAT TYPE OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES ARE AVAILABLE?

A: Special procedures generally fall into two categories:

1. Procedures which may invalidate the use of test norms.

These usually provide an advantage over the norming group (e.g., extending time limits), or change the nature of the test (e.g., using a braille format), or both (e.g., reading a test to a student).

Scores made with the use of these procedures may not be applied toward graduation competency requirements without the approval of the Superintendent. Requests for special testing procedures and the application of the resulting scores toward the graduation competency requirements are to be made by the students' ARD Committee through ORE to the Superintendent. A form is attached for this purpose.

2. Procedures which do not invalidate the use of test norms.

These are not seen as affecting the nature or rigors of the standardized test. Some of these are using large-type editions, marking answers for a student, administering a test for a single student, revising the test schedule, and signing the introduction and directions.

Q: WHO SHOULD MAKE A REQUEST FOR SPECIAL TESTING PROCEDURES FOR A STUDENT AT MY SCHOOL?

A: Requests for special testing procedures are to be made by the ARD Committee to the building administrator (usually a principal). The building administrator will contact the following for assistance in providing for these special needs.

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Type of Test</u>
Office of Research and Evaluation	a. Achievement b. Minimum Competency for Graduation
Department of Secondary Education	a. Aptitude b. Vocational

Q: WHO WILL ADMINISTER THE TESTS USING THESE SPECIAL PROCEDURES?

A: Regular school personnel should administer tests under special testing procedures whenever possible. In the event that school personnel cannot conduct these testings, Special Education will provide qualified testers. Any necessary training for these testers will be provided jointly by Special Education personnel and the Office of Research and Evaluation or the Department of Secondary Education.

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES
Testing for Minimum Competency for Graduation

TO: Superintendent

THROUGH: Director, Office of Research and Evaluation

FROM:

ARD Committee Representative

School

DATE:

The ARD Committee for _____, _____, _____
 _____ Student Name _____ Student Number _____ Current Grade _____
 requests that the following special procedure(s) be used in administering the stan-
 dardized tests for graduation competency, and that the resulting scores be approved
 for application toward the graduation competency requirements.

Reading

Mach

Special Procedures

Braille

Read Test to Student

Extend Time Limits

Other:

Comments:

I recommend that this request be _____ Approved.

Not Approved.

Director's Signature _____ Date _____

Data

Comments:

This request is _____ Approved.

Not Approved.

Superintendent's Signature

Date _____

If you need additional copies of this form, call ORE at 438-1227 or reproduce copies from this one.

May 19, 1983

TO: [REDACTED] Itinerant Teacher for the Visually Handicapped
FROM: David Wilkinson *DW*
SUBJECT: Change in Designated Testing Status for Students Administered Tests
with Extended Time

As we discussed on May 12, a decision has been made in ORE to change the testing status of those special education students for whom an ARD Committee specified a test administration with extended time. This is to answer your question about this decision more formally and to provide the documentation of this decision that you requested.

Because, so far as we can ascertain, the STEP and ITBS norms do not include administrations with special testing procedures, such as extended time, we feel that scores such as percentiles and grade equivalents, which are derived from these norms, may not be an accurate and reliable estimate of a student's achievement and may be liable to misinterpretation. Therefore, it was decided that any test administered under one of the special testing procedures listed under Category A on the Special Education scanning form--Braille, read test, and extended time--needs to be taken for experience only, since the norms are not appropriate for these testing conditions. Accordingly, the testing status of students was changed from valid to experience only for those tests for which Category A procedures, including extended time, were employed.

A consequence of this change is that scores for redesignated tests, as with all experience-only scores, are not reported to the student or the campus, but are sent instead to the special education supervisor or coordinator assigned to the campus. This individual is requested by ORE to use discretion in sharing experience-only scores with other school personnel or with the student or the student's parents. This request is made for the reason stated earlier, that experience-only scores are not considered to be valid scores and may be misinterpreted or misused, such as being given too much weight in course placement decisions.

I hope this explanation is useful. If you have concerns about the decision or our procedures, I encourage you to express them to [REDACTED] so that we can discuss them with her when we meet next. If you have questions about individual students' scores, please call me and I will give them to you, or you may come to the ORE offices for them.

DW:if

cc: [REDACTED]

Approved: [REDACTED]
Director of Research and Evaluation